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The Kremlin has been dusting off old Bolshevik intimidation techniques since the U.S. signed a missile defense partnership with Poland last month. The Russian foreign ministry promised that its response "would go beyond diplomacy," and a Russian general mused that this meant its nuclear missiles would have to target Poland. Who would have thought such talk would find an accommodating ear in the U.S. Congress?

That will be the question when Illinois Republican Representative Mark Kirk offers an amendment in the coming days to the Defense Appropriations bill to restore funding for missile defense sites in Poland and the Czech Republic. The money was struck in May by Democrats who justified the cuts by claiming that the Iranian threat was not developing quickly and a deal with Poland hadn't been signed. Now Iran has tried to orbit its first satellite and a deal with Poland is in place, so we'll soon see if House Democrats and Barack Obama change with the new reality.

Even as Polish leaders were risking Russia's wrath by signing the U.S. deal, California Democrat Ellen Tauscher declared that the missile defense partnership was proceeding way too fast. Ms. Tauscher wrote on the left-wing Huffington Post last month that the U.S.-Polish pact would "build an ideologically-based system that is untested and certainly not ready, against a threat that has not yet emerged."

Ms. Tauscher chairs the House Strategic Forces Subcommittee and so can be a real obstacle to the Polish deal and other attempts to forge closer alliances with countries on the Russian periphery. Ditto for House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee Chairman John Murtha, who loves earmarks but can't see fit to help our Polish allies.

As distressing, these missile defense objections have been echoed by Barack Obama spokeswoman Wendy Morigi, who recently explained the Presidential candidate's position as "Congress will not and should not fund a system until testing has proven that it works, and that testing will not be completed until 2010 at the earliest."

The timing of these remarks couldn't have been worse. Polish leaders finally struck the missile deal, after months of national debate, in the wake of Russia's invasion of Georgia. The agreement is largely symbolic, since the 10 interceptors couldn't possibly stop a Russian attack and are really aimed at Iran. But the symbolism is still useful as a message to Moscow that its Georgian imperialism won't cower everyone in Eastern Europe. It is also an expression of Poland's confidence in America as an ally. "We're determined this time around to have alliances backed by realities, backed by capabilities," says Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski.

On Monday, Mr. Sikorski met with Mr. Kirk and John McCain in Chicago to discuss missile defense in Poland. While some have questioned whether the deal signed in August will get through Poland's parliament, Mr. Sikorski tells us there will be no problem with ratification, most likely by the end of the year. On the other hand, U.S. failure to honor its new commitments to Poland would be disastrous to the country's faith in NATO. "We do feel that NATO should revive its role as a military organization," Mr. Sikorski notes.

The Tauscher-Obama objections will make Polish leaders wonder if their new agreement will be undercut by the next Administration, or in a Congress likely to be run by Democrats for years to come. And the comments will delight Vladimir Putin, who would like nothing better than to show Poles and Ukrainians that it's risky to trust the inconstant Americans.

The Pentagon has made significant progress in missile defenses this decade, and our allies are eager to participate in their development. Once sites are developed, either at home or abroad, they can be upgraded as the technology improves. The point of defenses is to deploy them before a threat is real, so we aren't caught by surprise. The Tauscher-Obama "ideologically-based" hostility to the Polish agreement helps to explain why a majority of Americans aren't sure they trust Democrats on matters of national security.